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ABSTRACT

One of the key challenges facing community colleges in the 1990's is the development of leadership that represents the diversity of students and local constituents. In a 1991 survey of 1,097 community college presidents, only 11% of those surveyed belonged to minority groups. Programs do exist, however, to help minority group members structure their careers and become community college administrators. These programs are offered by universities, such as the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas; higher education associations, such as workshops sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges; and minority higher education organizations, such as the National Council on Black American Affairs. Community colleges seeking to improve minority administrator representation should consider the following recommendations: (1) identify and publicize college goals and timetables for diversity; (2) maintain clear policies and procedures for hiring, awarding tenure, and evaluating; (3) require regular progress reports; (4) enlist the help of consulting organizations that specialize in minority recruitment; (5) advertise openings in minority community publications; (6) give the Equal Employment Opportunity officer sufficient authority; (7) search for administrative candidates from sources other than the traditional academic pipeline; and (8) encourage minority faculty to participate in administrative activities. Lists of programs and organizations providing professional development opportunities are included. (TGI)

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Digest

May 1996 EDO-JC-96-07

Achieving Administrator Diversity

by Elizabeth Foote

Community colleges are enrolling significant numbers of students from Latino, African American, and Asian American backgrounds. However, community colleges have not achieved the same degree of diversity among their leaders as they have among their students; administrators have remained predominately white. One of the key challenges facing these institutions in the 1990s is the development of leadership that represents the diversity of these schools' students and local constituents.

Based on the publication, **Achieving Administrative Diversity, New Directions for Community Colleges**, Number 94, this digest reviews the current status of minority administrators, describes pathways to administration for minorities, discusses steps community colleges can take to improve minority administrator recruitment and retention, and offers resource programs and organizations.

Status of Minority Administrators

In a 1991 survey of 1,097 community college presidents, Vaughan (1996) found that 89% were white, 4.5% were African American, 3% were Latino, 1.8% were Native American, and 1.7% belonged to other minority groups, including Asian American. He also found that there were few minorities on the traditional path to the presidency; 57% of all community college presidents had been a chief academic officer before becoming president while only 7% of all chief academic officers were minorities. Furthermore, there were few minorities in the teaching ranks; in 1990 only 10% of all full-time community college faculty were minorities.

Why is there a lag in minority representation? According to Phelps and Taber (1996), there are several reasons: weak or indifferent recruitment practices, lack of commitment to diversity, lack of training programs, and institutional racism. Moreover, the majority of community colleges are located in predominately white suburban and rural areas.

Pathways to Administration for Minorities

There is no single pathway to administration. Two current minority administrators who wrote for this volume "accidentally" found themselves in leadership roles. Bowen (1996) was an assistant professor of biology when, during the unrest of 1968, students requested an African American administrator on campus. He was asked to become the Special Assistant to the president for Minority Affairs. Similarly, in the late 1960's Cortada (1996) was teaching and researching medieval and modern European history when he was asked to join the Associate Provost's office. As Cortada observes, "the next generation will have to structure their careers more deliberately" (p. 63).

Several programs have been established to help minority group members structure their careers and become community college administrators. Pierce, Mahoney, and Kee (1996) found three types of professional development opportunities: university-based programs, programs offered by higher education associations, and those offered by minority higher education organizations.

In the U.S. and Canada, there are approximately sixty graduate programs that emphasize the study of community colleges. Some courses of study devoted to leadership are also based at universities, such as the Community College Leadership Program (CCLP) at the University of Texas, Austin (which leads to an Ed.D. or Ph.D.), the Leadership Institute of a New Century (LINC) at Iowa State University, and the University of Kentucky Community College System Leadership Academy.

Several higher education associations offer seminars, internship programs, and workshops designed to improve management and leadership skills. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) all sponsor programs that range from workshops held at their national conventions to year-long Fellows programs.

To recruit and encourage prospective minority administrators, minority-centered higher education groups have offered professional development opportunities. Among these groups are the National Council on Black American Affairs (NCBAA), the National Community College Hispanic Council, the Asian and Pacific Islanders Council, and the American Association for Women in Community Colleges.

Improving Minority Administrator Recruitment and Retention

Phelps and Taber (1996) offer several recruitment strategies that would allow community colleges to improve minority representation. Recommended strategies include:

- Identify and publicize college goals and timetables for diversity; reward compliance.
- Maintain clear policies and procedures for hiring, tenure, and evaluation.
- Require regular progress reports.

- Enlist the help of consulting organizations that specialize in minority recruitment.

- Give the Equal Employment Opportunity officer enough authority; he or she should report directly to the president and should be taken seriously by the human resources department, appointing authorities, and other administrators.

- Advertise openings in minority community publications; communicate with professional minority organizations, church groups, and other community organizations.

- Offer diversity training for current faculty and staff to create a cordial and inviting workplace.

- Institute sensitive new employee orientation and employee integration plans.

Phelps and Taber indicate that not all members of minority groups are committed to diversity, nor are they necessarily experts on affirmative action.

Vaughan (1996) adds to this list the following recommendations:

- Search for administrative candidates from sources other than the traditional academic pipeline, such as public school superintendents and returning military officers.

- Provide mentors and sponsors for potential minority candidates.

- Seek qualified candidates; eliminate the words "best qualified".

In addition, Fujimoto (1996) offers the following tactics:

- Encourage minority faculty to participate in administrative activities, such as academic senates and unions.

- Provide professional development leadership opportunities in local, statewide, and national community college organizations.

- Work with the private corporate sector to find funding for innovative projects.

Conclusion

By the year 2000, one out of every three Americans will be non-white (Muller, 1996). As the United States becomes more diverse, community colleges have an obligation to teach about and to serve as a model of diversity. Minority leadership in the community college will facilitate achieving these objectives.

References

This digest was drawn from **Achieving Administrative Diversity, New Directions for Community Colleges**, Number 94, edited by Raymond C. Bowen and Gilbert H. Muller; published in June, 1996. The cited articles include: "Paradox and Promise: Leadership and Neglected Minorities," by George Vaughan; "From the Projects to the Presidency: An African American Odyssey," by Raymond C. Bowen; "The Powers of the Presidency," by Rafael L. Cortada; "The Community College Presidency: An Asian Pacific American Perspective," by M. Jack Fujimoto; "Urban Community Colleges: Gateways to Administrative Diversity," by Gilbert H. Muller; "Affirmative Action as an Equal Opportunity Opportunity," by Donald G. Phelps and Lynn Sullivan Taber; and "Professional Development Resources for Minority Administrators," by David R. Pierce, James R. Mahoney, and Arnold M. Kee.

Professional Development Resources
(from Pierce, Mahoney, and Kee, 1996, p. 141-143)

Programs

Community College Leadership Prgm.
University of Texas at Austin
Education Building 348
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John Roueche, Director
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Community College System Leadership Academy
University of Kentucky Community College System
17 Breckinridge Hall
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Arthur Stumpf, Director
606/257-8607

Leadership Institute of a New Century
Iowa State University
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Organizations

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